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INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO.
PCT/US00/24524

INTERNATIONAL FILING DATE
07 September 2000

PRIORITY DATE CLAIMED
07 September 1999

TITLE OF INVENTION METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR CREATING AND MANAGING CONTENT ON AN EXTRANET WITHOUT PROGRAMMING SKILLS

APPLICANT(S) FOR DO/EO/US Richard C. SHAW, et al.

Applicant herewith submits to the United States Designated/Elected Office (DO/EO/US) the following items and other information:

1. ☒ This is a **FIRST** submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371.
2. ☐ This is a **SECOND** or **SUBSEQUENT** submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371.
3. ☒ This is an express request to begin national examination procedures (35 U.S.C. 371(f)). The submission must include items (5), (6), (9) and (21) indicated below.
4. ☐ The US has been elected by the expiration of 19 months from the priority date (Article 31).
5. ☒ A copy of the International Application as filed (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2))
 - a. ☒ is attached hereto (required only if not communicated by the International Bureau).
 - b. ☐ has been communicated by the International Bureau.
 - c. ☒ is not required, as the application was filed in the United States Receiving Office (RO/US).
6. ☐ An English language translation of the International Application as filed (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2)).
 - a. ☐ is attached hereto.
 - b. ☐ has been previously submitted under 35 U.S.C. 154(d)(4).
7. ☐ Amendments to the claims of the International Application under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3))
 - a. ☐ are attached hereto (required only if not communicated by the International Bureau).
 - b. ☐ have been communicated by the International Bureau.
 - c. ☐ have not been made; however, the time limit for making such amendments has NOT expired.
 - d. ☐ have not been made and will not be made.
8. ☐ An English language translation of the amendments to the claims under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371 (c)(3)).
9. ☐ An oath or declaration of the inventor(s) (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(4)).
10. ☐ An English language translation of the annexes of the International Preliminary Examination Report under PCT Article 36 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(5)).

Items 11 to 20 below concern document(s) or information included:

11. ☐ An Information Disclosure Statement under 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98.
12. ☐ An assignment document for recording. A separate cover sheet in compliance with 37 CFR 3.28 and 3.31 is included.
13. ☐ A FIRST preliminary amendment.
14. ☐ A SECOND or SUBSEQUENT preliminary amendment.
15. ☐ A substitute specification.
16. ☐ A change of power of attorney and/or address letter.
17. ☐ A computer-readable form of the sequence listing in accordance with PCT Rule 13ter.2 and 35 U.S.C. 1.821 - 1.825.
18. ☐ A second copy of the published international application under 35 U.S.C. 154(d)(4).
19. ☐ A second copy of the English language translation of the international application under 35 U.S.C. 154(d)(4).
20. ☒ Other items or information:
International Preliminary Examination Report; International Search Report; Postcard Receipt

10/070881

PCT/US00/24524

23195-06

21. ☒ The following fees are submitted:**BASIC NATIONAL FEE (37 CFR 1.492 (a) (1) - (5)):**

Neither international preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482)
nor international search fee (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)) paid to USPTO
and International Search Report not prepared by the EPO or JPO **\$1000.00**

International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) not paid to
USPTO but International Search Report prepared by the EPO or JPO **\$860.00**

International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) not paid to USPTO
but international search fee (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)) paid to USPTO **\$710.00**

International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) paid to USPTO
but all claims did not satisfy provisions of PCT Article 33(1)-(4) **\$690.00**

International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) paid to USPTO
and all claims satisfied provisions of PCT Article 33(1)-(4) **\$100.00**

ENTER APPROPRIATE BASIC FEE AMOUNT =

CALCULATIONS PTO USE ONLY

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\$ 690.00

\$ 130.00

Surcharge of \$130.00 for furnishing the oath or declaration later than ☐ 20 ☒ 30
months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(e)).

CLAIMS	NUMBER FILED	NUMBER EXTRA	RATE	\$
Total claims	18 - 20 =	0	x \$18.00	\$ 0.00
Independent claims	11 - 3 =	8	x \$80.00	\$ 640.00
MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM(S) (if applicable)				+ \$270.00
TOTAL OF ABOVE CALCULATIONS =				\$ 1,460.00

☐ Applicant claims small entity status. See 37 CFR 1.27. The fees indicated above
are reduced by 1/2.

SUBTOTAL = \$

Processing fee of \$130.00 for furnishing the English translation later than ☐ 20 ☐ 30
months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(f)).

TOTAL NATIONAL FEE = \$ 1,460.00

Fee for recording the enclosed assignment (37 CFR 1.21(h)). The assignment must be
accompanied by an appropriate cover sheet (37 CFR 3.28, 3.31). **\$40.00** per property +

TOTAL FEES ENCLOSED = \$ 1,460.00

Amount to be refunded:	\$
charged:	\$

- a. ☒ A check in the amount of \$ 1,460.00 to cover the above fees is enclosed.
- b. ☐ Please charge my Deposit Account No. _____ in the amount of \$ _____ to cover the above fees.
A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.
- c. ☒ The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any
overpayment to Deposit Account No. 03-3415. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.
- d. ☐ Fees are to be charged to a credit card. **WARNING:** Information on this form may become public. **Credit card
information should not be included on this form.** Provide credit card information and authorization on PTO-2038.

NOTE: Where an appropriate time limit under 37 CFR 1.494 or 1.495 has not been met, a petition to revive (37 CFR
1.137 (a) or (b)) must be filed and granted to restore the application to pending status.

SEND ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO:

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NAME

22,479

REGISTRATION NUMBER

**METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR CREATING AND MANAGING CONTENT ON AN
EXTRANET WITHOUT PROGRAMMING SKILLS****FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

This invention relates to a comprehensive employee electronic communication system. More particularly, the communication system includes the tools for the employer to create an Internet web presence without technical programming assistance and post communications to the web presence that are accessible via the Internet. The system is easy to use by the employer and by the employees, without technical assistance. Employees have the ability to access the employer communications from any computer terminal that provides access to the Internet. The employee access is password and ID secured.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

It is customary for employers to communicate information to employees in hardcopy form or orally. These communications can be in the form of manuals, procedures etc in three ring binders, single page announcements, voice mail messages, and group and one to one meetings. In addition, employers maintain and staff Human Resource departments to not only produce, but also to print, collate and distribute the hardcopy communications. The employer must rely upon many people in a chain to attempt to have current information available and communicated to all of its employees. Of course, the employer really has little assurance that all hardcopy manuals are actually updated, that all employees receive a current communiqué, that all information is available to all employees, and that all employees have equal access to events calendars or job postings. Furthermore, employee access to employer information is restricted to on premises access. Although it may be the case that employees are permitted to bring manuals and other documents to their homes, it is unlikely that they will anticipate the need for the information that they or their families may wish to access.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to a method of using a server to construct on an undivided memory a plurality of web sites. Each of these web sites is related to an administrator. The method comprises the steps of creating a template with a set of operations that will facilitate each of the plurality of administrators to construct and input content into its related web site, and of then responding to an administrator's logging on to the server, to initiate a process of constructing a web site. This process includes the steps of allocating a portion of the undivided memory to form a file for receiving site content, and of refreshing from the template the set of operations into the web site file, whereby each web site has its own set of operations to construct and input content into its file.

WO 01/18666

PCT/US00/24524

In a further aspect of this invention, a server is adapted to communicate over a network with network sites connected thereto. The network sites operate in a language adapted for transmission over the network and used by the network sites. The server of this invention includes a memory comprising a plurality of files. The plurality of sites formed on the server. Each of the plurality of sites comprises one of the files, said plurality of files are filled with content written in a native language other than the network adapted language. The server further includes an engine for converting the native language into the network adapted language, and a controller responsive to a request from one of the network sites for the content of one of the server sites to download from the server site its content in its native language to the engine, whereby the engine converts the downloaded native language of the one server site into the network adapted language for transmission over the internet to the requesting network site.

In a still further aspect of this invention, a server is adapted for communication with a plurality of administrators. The server comprises a memory comprising a plurality of files, and a plurality of sites formed on the server. Each of the plurality of sites comprises one of the plurality of files. Each file of a server site stores a set of operations that an administrator related to the one site may use to construct its site and to input data into the site's file at the discretion of the related administrator.

In another aspect of this invention, there is described a method of operating a server to preassign a plurality of web sites to a plurality of prospects. The server includes a memory on which a plurality of the web sites may be constructed. The method comprises the steps of developing a list of prospects for a web site, providing to each of the prospects an indication that a web site has been assigned to the prospect, notifying the prospects that a web site has been preassigned to them and that each prospect has been assigned an indication. At least one prospect logs on to the server and inputs its indication thereto, whereby the server responds to the prospect's logging onto the server and the prospect's indication to construct on the memory a web site for the prospect.

In another embodiment of this invention, a server is adapted for communication with a plurality of administrators and a plurality of users. The server comprises a plurality of virgin sites ready to be generated and loaded with content, and a controller for receiving communications from each of the plurality of administrators and the plurality of users. Each of the plurality of web sites has a file for receiving content. Further, the server is programmed with a set of operations for constructing and loading each of the virgin sites. The controller permissions one of the plurality of administrators to access the set operations, whereby the administrator can construct and load with content a related site at the discretion of the permissioned administrator. The controller is responsive to a communication of a user to permission that user to only access and view the content loaded into the user's related web site.

WO 01/18666

PCT/US00/24524

In a further aspect of this invention, a method is described for adapting a server to permission users to access at least one web site, the one web site having a content file. The method comprises the steps of constructing and filling the content file of the web site with content, permissioning an administrator to control the access to the one web site by uploading the names of permissioned users in a user file, permissioning a user to gain access to the one web site and to view its content by matching the name of the user with a name in the user file.

This invention also contemplates a method of facilitating a host to manage a plurality of web sites. Each of the plurality of web sites includes a file. The method comprises the steps of creating a master template with a set of operations for constructing and loading content to each file of the plurality of web sites, the host giving instructions to the master template to determine the set of operations, and repetitively refreshing each file of the web sites with the set of operations from the master template, whereby the construction and loading of content to each web site is controlled by the host.

In a still further aspect of this invention, a server is adapted to communicate over a network with each of an administrator, a user and a host of the server. The server comprises a plurality of virgin web sites ready to be constructed; each web site has a file ready to be filed with content. The server further includes a controller, which is programmed to communicate separately with each of the administrator, the user and the host, to generate a distinct homepage for each of the administrator, the user and the host upon the login of each. The administrator's homepage comprises a set of links to construct and to load content to the file of the administrator's web site. The user's homepage comprises a link permitting the user to access the contents of the file of its website. The host's homepage has a set of links to manage the server, and to keep track and to manage the use of the plurality of web sites.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a functional block diagram of a web site creating and management system in accordance with the teaching of this invention;

Figure 2 is a screen displaying a web site homepage at which an administrator can login to the system or can have a trial of the system;

Figure 3 represents the process by which the administrator take a trial of the system;

Figures 4A, B, C and D represent respectively the login process by which the administrator logs in to the published web site, a screen presenting the homepage of the proprietor web site, a process for automatically composing the proprietor homepage, and a process for using a master template to create and update a set of operations loaded into each of the web sites;

IPEA/US 06 AUG 2001

Figure 5 is a screen that presents a control panel of tools to be used by the administrator to construct and load the web site with content;

Figures 6 - 9 represent the process by which the administrators use the tools of the control panel shown in Figure 5 to construct and load a proprietor's web site with content;

5 Figure 10 is a screen that shows the homepage of the server management system; and

Figures 11 - 15 represent the process by which the host or its employees manage the server to allocate the proprietor's web sites embedded in the server and to keep track and manage their use of the web sites.

DESCRIPTION OF A PREFERRED EMBODIMENT OF THE INVENTION

10 Referring now to the drawings and, in particular, to Figure 1, there is shown a web site creation and management system 10, which uses a network, i.e., an Internet 12 in one illustrative embodiment of this invention, to facilitate communication by the various participants who use and/or interact this system, namely site proprietors, users, sponsors and a server host and its employees, as will be explained below. Generally, the server host or its employees secure and program the server 14
15 to create on the server 14 a plurality of web sites. Typically, the server host markets and allocates these ready to be loaded or programmed with content web sites to prospective proprietors. In turn, the proprietor loads its web site with its content and, further, authorizes certain users to access and view the proprietor's content. Other participants to the system 10 include a primary administrator and an associate administrator. As will be explained below, the site proprietor can designate a primary
20 administrator with the authority to program the web site of its proprietor's web site with content and, further, to designate one or more associate administrators with limited authority to only load the web site with content.

The process of the host's marketing these web sites to prospective proprietors, the proprietors' acquiring the use of a web site on the server 14, the users' accessing and viewing of it proprietor's site
25 content, and the primary and associate administrators to load or program content on to its proprietor's web site, use the Internet 12 to facilitate communication between the prospective and site proprietors, the users and the primary and associate administrators, and the server 14. In particular, each prospective proprietor has a terminal 16e, the site proprietors terminals 16a-1 and 16a-2, each primary administrator a terminal 16c-1, each associate administrator a terminal 16d-4, each user a terminal
30 16b-3, and each host employee a terminal 16f.

The server 14 has a host web site 20 with a root URL. The host web site 20 has a plurality of application programs 22 - 30, which effect the creation and content loading of each of the proprietors' web sites 16a-1 and 16a-2 and permits the server host to manage the server 14 and the web sites allocated to the site proprietors 16a-1 and 16a-2, as will be explained below. These web site

AMENDED SHEET

IPEA/US 06 AUG 2001

application programs include the login application program 22, the management application program 24, the site template application program 26, the invitations management application program 28 and the home page management application program 30.

Though not separately shown in Figure 1, the applications programs are stored on a hard disc memory of the server 14. The hard disc of the server 14 is further subdivided into a number of folders 32a - n, one folder for each of the proprietor web sites to be implemented by the server 14. In particular, each folder 32 includes a set of proprietor files 36, which stores the content input by site's proprietor or its primary or associate administrator, and a web site URL detector 34. In addition to the root URL assigned to the host's web site 20 of the server 14, a nested URL unique to each proprietor and its web site 16a-1 and 16a-2 is also assigned to each of the folders 32a - n to permit site content to be transmitted to a particular folder 32.

Each of the prospective proprietors, site proprietors, users, primary administrators, associate administrators and host employees may communicate with the server 14 by entering the root and the nested URLs into a browser of its terminal 16, whereby a message will be transmitted from that terminal 16 over the internet 12 to the server 14 and, in particular, to its host or main web site 20. The host web site 20 is coupled to its Login application file 22, which stores both the root URL of the site 20 and nested URLs for each of the folders 32. If the root URL and the nested URL attached to the message transmitted from one of the administrator terminals 16d-4 and 16c-1, or from one of the user terminal 16a-2 match the root URL and the nested URL retained in the login application file 22, the message will be transmitted to that folder 32 identified by the corresponding nested URL.

The management file 24 also stores a nested URL indicative of the file's address and the programming associated with the management of the server 14 by the host and its employees. Thus, a message from the host employee terminal 16f with the root URL of the host web site 20 and the nested URL of the management file 24 attached thereto, will be directed by the Login file 22 to the Management file 24 to initiate a management function as will be described below.

The server 14 illustratively takes the form of an IBM NetFinity 5000 server, which utilizes Microsoft NT as its operating system and Lotus Domino as its web server. Illustratively, the server 14 is dependent upon both the Notes formula language and LotusScript for its functionality, and Domino for its migration to the Internet 12. It is contemplated that the server 14 could be built and programmed with other hardware or software. In a preferred embodiment of this invention, the server 14 is implemented with a contemporary browser that is programmed with JavaScript for accessing the server 14. Each set of proprietor files 32 is implemented in one illustrative embodiment of this invention by a separate Lotus Notes database, which stores the proprietor content in the form of design elements including forms, views, agents, script libraries, navigators, subforms and documents.

AMENDED SHEET

IPEA/US 06 AUG 2001

All design elements are connected to converse with each other, as well as with the other databases within the application using both LotusScript and the Notes formula language.

The HTML files, that are ultimately transmitted to and from system participants, are created dynamically by a Lotus Domino engine 38. As shown in Figure 1, the engine is included within the server 14, and is interconnected with the proprietor file index 20, the folders 32, the URL detectors 34 and the proprietor files 36 to permit bidirectional flows of data to and from the server 14. HTML files from the participant's terminals 16 are transmitted over the Internet 12 to the server 24 and, in particular, to the engine 38 where the HTML files are converted into LotusScript, in this example, and then directed to one of the URL detectors 34. A return signal, initially in LotusScript, is sent from the proprietor file 36 directly to the engine 38, which dynamically translates it into HTML, before sending it to one of the terminals 16. In particular, the engine 38 receives the data from the proprietor's file 36 and dynamically converts it into HTML for viewing on the browser of one of the participant's terminal 16. Specifically, the software allows the design elements described above, as well as the content files the proprietor may have stored with the proprietors' folders to be converted on the fly into HTML. It is appreciated that site content stored in the proprietor files 36 may be written in any of the well known languages, e.g., LotusScript, adobe, excel, word, word perfect etc. This engine 38 dynamically converts the site content, which is written in any of these languages, into HTML for transmission over the Internet 12 to one of the participants' terminals 16.

After each proprietor web site has been fully programmed and its content loaded into its set of proprietor files 32, that web site is given its own address or nested URL within the server domain, as well as its own distinct directory of the database kept in its proprietor files 36; in turn, this directory is kept within the proprietor file 18 to facilitate the transmission of messages to the addressed folder 32. In addition to having its own directory, as well as its own URL within the server domain, each published web site has its own unique security in terms of which user or administrator will gain access to a particular folder 32 and the site content stored in its proprietor files 36.

This invention permits one of the site proprietors to use a web site and to load the set of proprietor files 36 associated with its web site with that content the proprietor wishes to communicate with a selected population of users, without the need to obtain a server, to program it with that software necessary to create a web site, or to maintain the server and its software. For example, the site proprietor could be an employer, who wishes to communicate with its employees, i.e., the users in the context of this example. In this example, the web site content could be information about benefits offered by the employer for its users, company policy, job offerings or news, i.e., any information that the employer would need to share with its employees. More particularly, the invention is a process by which the site proprietors can utilize this invention to create a web site without the need of obtaining and programming a server in order to communicate with its users via the Internet. The process pursued by a prospective proprietor involves receiving the permission of the host of the server 14 to

AMENDED SHEET

IPEA/US 06 AUG 2001

use one of the plurality of web sites, which the host has established on its server 14 and manages as will be explained. In other words, the site proprietor nests a site on the root site or URL of the host's server 14. All site proprietors will nest a site on the same root URL.

This invention provides the programming for the creation of the web site for the site proprietor, whereby the site proprietor controls the site content, can change the content as frequently as desired and has control over the population of users who can access and view the proprietor's web site. Illustratively, the proprietor uses passwords and IDs to control which users have access to its web site. By contrast, the server host maintains and manages the web sites on its server 14. Further, neither of the users nor the server host can change the web site content. In particular, only the site proprietor or one designated by the proprietor, i.e., a primary or associate administrator, can change the web site content.

Further, this invention also provides tools to the server host for managing the invention in the form of the management application program 24, including allocating web sites at the host's discretion to selected site proprietors, creating and modifying pricing structures for the use of these sites by the site proprietors, modifying the layout of the corresponding menus of the assigned web sites, and providing general system maintenance to the sites and the server 14.

If the viewer has already registered, the viewer could choose to login and will be prompted for their user ID and password. Once logged in, they will be taken to a homepage 40 of their proprietor's site, as shown in Figure 4B. The administrators of the site can click on a "Control Panel" link 41, which brings them into their site's "Control Panel" screen 300, as shown in Figure 5. As will be described in detail below, the "Control Panel" link 41 appears on a header 42a of the homepage 40. The "Control Panel" 300 is the tool used by the administrators to manage both the content and the list of users who can access and view a particular proprietor site.

Referring now to Figure 2, a primary or associate administrator or a user transmits in a process 44 a request to the server 14. Initially in step 43, one of the above named participants inputs the root URL of the host's or main web site 20 of the server 14 into the browser of the participant's terminal 16 (Figure 1). In step 45, the URL borne by the message will first be compared to the URLs or addresses maintained in the proprietor file index 18 (Figure 1) and, if there is match between the root URL borne by the message and that retained in the index 20, the Login application program 22 of the host web site 20 will be invoked and a home page 47 of the main or host web site 20 as illustrated in Figure 2 will be displayed on the terminal 16 of the participant sending this message. As shown in Figure 2, the web site home page 47 displays the following three links: 1) "Request for Free Trial" 48, 2) "User Login" 50 and 3) "Demo Site" to prompt the participant to initiate one of the two suggested actions for continuation of the session. The first link "Free Trial" 48 invites a prospective proprietor to request a free trial of proprietor web site. The second hyperlink "User Login" 48 is addressed to

AMENDED SHEET

IPEA/US 06 AUG 2001

registered users and provides the opportunity to login. The third hyperlink "Demo Site" 49 invites a user to view one of a set of demonstration sites. The participant's clicking on link 48 bring the participant to step 51 of Figure 3. Clicking on the "Login" link 50 will bring the participant to step 140 of Figure 4a. Upon clicking on the "Demo Site" link 49, a screen displaying the various types of demonstration sites is presented to the participant, who then chooses which site to access and view. The web site home page 47 may also include in an illustrative embodiment of this invention links (not shown) to the various applicable policies, terms of use, user care, email response capability and other information about the proprietor sites.

Figure 3 shows the process of permitting a prospective proprietor to view a free trial, whereby the prospective proprietor can access, view and load content into the host web site 20 implemented on the server 14 for a limited period of time. When the prospective participant clicks on the "Request for Free Trial" link 48 (Figure 2), the program moves to the process 53 as shown in Figure 3, wherein a form is displayed in step 51 that requests the prospective proprietor to input the required information needed for a trial of the proprietor site, e.g., its name, the URL of its home site, and the name, initial ID, pass word and the e mail address of the proprietor's primary administrator. After the prospective proprietor has input the required information, the prospective proprietor clicks on the "Send" button in step 60 to transmit the required information to the host server 14. Next, step 70 displays a Thank You message in appreciation of the proprietor's input of the required information. The prospective proprietor user can click in step 80 on "home" to again display in step 90 the host's home page 47 shown in Figure 2. Also when the prospective proprietor clicks on "Send" in step 60, an email notification is generated and the request for a free trial site is also transmitted in step 100 to the management file 24, whereby a site is created, as will be described below in Figure 10, and a record of the trial site, the proprietor and related information is stored in step 110 in the server 14. Then an email is generated and transmitted in step 120 to notify the prospective proprietor that the site has been created and is now ready to be utilized and filled with content by the prospective proprietor.

Figure 4A shows the login process by a user or by a primary or associate administrator. If as shown in Figure 2 one of these participants clicked on the "Administrator/User Login" link 50, the program moves to step 140, wherein the participant is prompted to input its ID and password. In step 150, the participant's ID and password are compared with the IDs and passwords which are retained in the proprietor file index 18 (Figure 1). If step 150 determined that the participant is a user, then step 180 determines whether the user's name and password are associated with a site that is published, and further whether the user's name and pass word belongs to a primary or associate administrator or to a user. If step 150 determines that the participant's ID and password are associated with an administrator, then step 160 determines whether this is the first time that the administrator has logged in and the site is not published. Then step 170, based on the administrator's ID and password, retrieves and uses the preliminary site information to create the general layout of the proprietor's web

AMENDED SHEET

IPEA/US 06 AUG 2001

site. The detailed steps of the process carried out in step 170 to create the proprietor's web site are described in detail below with respect to Figure 4B. When the proprietor's web site has been constructed in step 170, the completed proprietor's site is published in step 180, its homepage 40, as shown in Figure 4B, is displayed and the administrator can now click on in step 190 to access the "Control Panel" 300 as shown in Figure 5.

Referring now to Figure 4C, the process 170 of generating the proprietor's web site will now be described in greater detail. This process 170 is completely automated and builds the site based on the information found with the invitation document. Process 170 starts when the primary administrator logs in step 160. Next, step 174 creates the header portion 42a of the proprietor homepage 40 (Figure 4B) by accessing the preliminary site information entered in step 110 (Figure 3) by the prospective proprietor into the management file 24 (Figure 1) and, in particular, the name of the proprietor, and by finally inserting the proprietor's name into the header portion 42a. Then, step 176 creates the introduction portion 42d by accessing the invitation, which is stored in the invitation file 26 (Figure 1). A host employee creates the invitation from information supplied from the sponsor, e.g., an introductory text and/or image supplied by the sponsor. Next, step 182 supplies links to the host's statements on copyright, privacy and terms of site use; these links and information are standard for the footer portions 42g of all of the proprietor homepages 40. Similar to step 178, step 184 accesses the invitation retained in the invitations file 26 and, in particular, the menus to be inserted into the portions 42b and c on the right hand side of the proprietor's homepage 40 (Figure 4B). In step 186, the site has been generated and is ready to be utilized.

The proprietor homepage 40 and its portions can be modified and customized by an administrator's use of the control panel 300, as will be below with respect to Figure 5.

If the participant is a user as determined in step 150, the user is permitted to access and view a particular proprietor's web site. Note from the configuration of steps 150, 160, 170 and 180 (Figure 4A), that only the administrator but not the user is permitted to create in step 170 a web site.

After the administrator has clicked in step 190 (Figure 4A) on the "Control Panel" option, the process checks in step 200 as to whether the site associated with the administrator's proprietor has been registered. If not as determined in step 200, a registration form is displayed in step 240, whereby the administrator can input the appropriate registration information. Next, step 210 determines whether the host's site agreement, which spells out the terms under which the proprietor may use its site, has been previously approved by the proprietor's administrator. (The administrator must complete the site registration and accept the site agreement to register users.) If step 210 determines that the agreement has not been accepted or if the administrator has elected to continue in step 250 after the site had been registered in step 240, the process displays in step 260 the host's site agreement to the administrator. If as determined in step 270, the administrator declines to accept the agreement, the

AMENDED SHEET

Referring now to Figure 4D, there is explained the use of a master template, which is stored in the template application file 26, as shown in Figure 1. The master template includes a set of operations or "tools" for constructing each web site and uploading content to its proprietor file 36 (Figure 1). These operations are originally set and may be revised by a host employee. As will be explained below, the master template is refreshed by uploading a copy thereof to one or more of the web sites, as identified by their folders 32. As shown in Figure 4D, the refreshing is triggered by any of three events 238, 242 or 244. The triggers 238 and 244 are automated, and the third trigger 242 is a manual process which is invoked by a host employee. The first automated trigger 238 occurs when an administrator of a prospective proprietor logs into the host web site 20 for the first time as detected in step 160 (Figure 4A) as explained above. This initial login effects, among numerous other actions, a proprietor file to be created in step 170 (Figure 4A) by downloading a copy of the master template retained in the host's site template file 26. In this instance, only a single proprietor site's set of operations is refreshed. In particular, step 246 causes a copy of the master template retained in the master template application file 26 to be downloaded to a particular web site and its folder 34x that has been assigned to the prospective proprietor of the administrator. The second automatic trigger is effected on a regular basis, e.g., once each evening, and refreshes the set of orders of all of the proprietor files as represented by the folders 34a-n (Figure 4A). In particular, step 250 refreshes each of the proprietor sites, as identified by their folders 34a-n. It will be appreciated that the use of the master template permits an efficient and on-going control by a host employee of the operations to construct and load content to the web sites. This use of the master template allows a host employee to automate rollout of new sets of tools for use by administrators, bug fixes and other programmatic changes, to all sites on a scheduled basis without the manual intervention of a host employee. The third trigger is a manual process and is fired by a host employee requesting in step 248 a refresh of the set of operations for one site in step 246 or many sites in step 250 of the proprietor's sites. This method allows for immediate changes, of the same type as described above, in all necessary proprietor sites.

10

IPEA/US 06 AUG 2001

Figure 5 is a diagram that represents the control panel 300 of each of the proprietor's site. As shown in Figure 4C, the data representative of the control panel 300, as well as the programming tools shown in Figures 6 - 9, which is used by the administrator to compose and load content into each of the proprietor's site, is replicated for and included within each of the folders 32a - n. The control panel 300 is accessible only available to administrators (and not users). After gaining access to the control panel 300 in step 230 (Figure 4A), the administrator has several choices of links for the purpose of changing or inputting content to its proprietor's site. Step 301 represents the action of clicking on one of the links. Link 300a brings the primary or associate administrator to step 310 as shown in Figure 6. Link 300b brings the administrator to step 350 as shown in Figure 6. Link 300c brings the administrator to step 390 as shown in Figure 6. Link 300d brings the administrator to step 430 as shown in Figure 7. Link 300e brings the administrator to step 580 as shown in Figure 7. Link 300f brings the administrator to step 620 as shown in Figure 8. Link 300g brings the administrator to step 730 as shown in Figure 9. Link 300h brings the administrator to step 760 as shown in Figure 9. Link 300i brings the administrator to step 790 as shown in Figure 9. Link 300j brings the administrator to step 840 as shown in Figure 9. Link 300k brings the administrator to step 880 as shown in Figure 9. Link 300l brings the administrator to step 900 as shown in Figure 9. Link 300m brings the administrator to step 920 as shown in Figure 9. Link 300n brings the administrator to step 940 as shown in Figure 9.

Figures 6 and 7 show the process by which the primary or associate administrator creates the proprietor's homepage 40 of the proprietor's web site, as shown in Figure 4B. In particular, the proprietor's homepage 40 comprises seven sections 42a - g. The portion 40a is a header and is disposed at the top of the homepage 40 and bears the company logo, name or optional slogan, as well as the control panel link 41 to facilitate access to the control panel 300 as shown in Figure 5. The portion 42d is an introduction and is disposed in the center of the homepage 40 and tells the users about the proprietor's site. The portion 42g is a footer and is disposed at the bottom of the home page 40 to present the copyright notice, link to privacy and the terms under which the user or administrator is permitted access to view the proprietor's site. The left hand side of the proprietor's homepage 40 comprises portions 42e and f, and relate to the content that the proprietor wishes to distribute to its users. The portion 42e is disposed in the upper left portion of the homepage 40 and is illustratively a menu of various topics of the proprietor's content with links to each listed topic. The proprietor's administrator may select and/or edit these topics as will be described below with respect to Figure 7 (link 4d). The portion 42f is disposed on the lower left hand side and displays a menu of links to service or product providers. The proprietor's administrator may change and/or add to these links (URLs) as will be described below with respect to Figure 4 (link 4d). In the context where the user is an employee of the proprietor/employer, the portion 42e may display various employer related topics,

'AMENDED SHEET

IPEA/US 06 AUG 2001

e.g., employer announcements, benefit and policy manuals, documents, job openings etc. In this illustrative context, portion 42f may display a menu of links to the employee benefit providers.

AMENDED SHEET

WO 01/18666

PCT/US00/24524

The right hand side of the proprietor's home page 40 includes portions 42b and c as shown in Figure 4B, which relate to some aspect of another participant in the system and apparatus of this invention, namely a sponsor. In a preferred embodiment of this invention, the sponsor uses the proprietor's homepage 40 to promote the sponsor's services and/or products. In an illustrative embodiment, the sponsor could be a financial institution and the portion 42b would display a menu of financial services offered by this sponsor and links to other web sites describing such services. Portion 42c would display a menu of related services associated to the sponsor and corresponding links to information thereon. The sponsor menus may be edited by the host or the employees of the host (but not the proprietor's administrators) as will be explained below with respect to Figure 12 (link 5r).

The content of the sponsor menus is in turn set by messages, termed "invitations, which are transmitted by the sponsor to the server 14, wherein they are stored in the invitations file 28 (Figure 1) and may be accessed and viewed as will be described below with respect to Figure 14 (link 5l). The sponsors benefit from the system of this invention in that sites created for the proprietors will have embedded therein links, that will facilitate the site's users to link to sponsor sites which not only provide such users information about the sponsor's services and/or products but enable them to purchase or license them. It is contemplated that the sponsors will compensate the server host for embedding the sponsor's links into the proprietor's web sites.

In addition, the sponsors may identify a number of prospective proprietors, illustratively customers/clients of the sponsor, to the server host. The host in turn may communicate with the sponsor's prospective proprietors providing them with the URL of the main or server homepage, data identifying the sponsor that proposed this prospect, e.g., an invitation number, and an ID and password for a preassigned site at the server 14 for that prospective proprietor. In this fashion, the sponsor's prospect may quickly login into the server 14 and have immediate access to its site for a free trial. Since the server 14 retains the sponsor ID for a particular prospective proprietor, the invitation's file can keep track of the use of that proprietor's site and the revenue derived from such use may be shared between the proposing sponsor and the server host.

Illustratively, the sponsor may use an information number to identify each of the prospective proprietors to which the sponsor would like to promote its services and/or products as explained above. Initially, the sponsor develops a list prospects. Then the host assigns an invitation number to each of the listed sponsor's prospects and creates a preassigned site for each of the sponsor's prospects. The host retains that list of invitation numbers in its server 14 and provides that list of invitation numbers to the sponsor. In turn, the sponsor communicates, e.g., sends a letter, E-mail etc., with one of the assigned invitation numbers to each of its prospects. In turn, the prospect may request a free trial by logging in to the server's homepage 44 as explained above with respect to Figure 2 and, further, may provide the homepage 44 with its invitation number. In turn, the server homepage

WO 01/18666

PCT/US00/24524

matches that invitation number with its retained number, whereby the fees and other conditions under which the prospect uses its proprietor web site will be set by agreement between the host and the sponsor.

As will be described below, the server 14 checks the invitation document (Figure 9, link 5i) for the menu options that will appear on the proprietor's homepage 40. The topics and content for the right side menus are determined by the menu name (Figure 9, link 5r) found within the invitation document (Figure 9, link 5i) and are not editable by the site users. The right side menu (Figure 9, link 5r) displays a predetermined list of links to sponsor products and services.

Referring now to Figure 6, when the administrator clicks in step 310 on link 300a (shown on the control panel 300(Figure 5), a page is displayed in step 320 to enable the administrator to input an image or both text and image for the header portion 42a of the site's homepage 40 (Figure 3B). Once the administrator clicks on "Save" in step 330, these changes are published to the site and the administrator is returned in step 340 to the site's control panel 300 (Figure 5), whereat the administrator is provided with the opportunity to utilize the tools provided by the control panel 300.

When the administrator clicks in step 350 on the link 300b (Figure 5), a page is displayed in step 360 that allows the administrator to input text or an image with both text and image for the introduction portion 42d of the site homepage 40 (Figure 4B). After the administrator clicks in step 370 on "Publish ", the administrator is returned in step 380 to the site control panel 300 (Figure 5), where at the administrator is given a further opportunity to utilize the control panel 300.

When the administrator clicks in step 390 on the link 300c (Figure 5), a page is presented in step 400 to the administrator that allows the administrator to input information and links for the footer portion 42g of the site homepage 40 (Figure 4B). When the administrator has clicked in step 410 on "Save", the administrator is taken in step 420. In step 420, the site control panel 300 (Figure 5) to permit the administrator to utilize the control panel 300 (Figure 5).

Referring now to Figure 7, when the administrator clicks in step 430 on the link 300d (Figure 5), a page is displayed in step 440 that allows the administrator to choice whether to revise the proprietor's menu topics which appear in the portion 42e of the site home page 40 (Figure 3B) or to select new topics. Next the administrator makes a choice in step 450. If the menu topics are to be revised, the administrator is taken to step 460, where the administrator is allowed to edit the topic menu names. Once the administrator clicks on "Save" in step 470, the administrator is returned to step 440 to continue to change the topic menu 40. In step 440, the user is again taken to the page that allows the choice of changing company info topics menu or content. If the administrator has now chosen in step 450 to select a new topic, the administrator is presented in step 480 with a page that allows the administrator to make one of the following choices: 1) to create a new draft version, 2) to delete an entire topic, or 3) to select a topic version to work with. When the administrator has made its

WO 01/18666

PCT/US00/24524

choice in step 490, the process moves based on this choice to step 500, wherein the entire topic is removed", to step 510, wherein a topic is selected to be used, or to step 530, which creates a new draft. In step 500, the administrator is asked to reconfirm that this topic is to be deleted. If the decision to delete is confirmed, the process returns to step 440, and if reversed, the process moves to step 480. If the administrator decided in step 490 to revise a particular topic, the process moves to step 510, where the administrator modifies the topic content and then clicks "Save" in step 520 before the process returns to step 440. If the administrator elected in step 490 to create a new topic menu, the administrator proceeds to compose a new draft. In an illustrative example, step 530 offers a number of template examples (stored in the related proprietor files 36 of the server 14 of Figure 1) from which a new menu may be created. For example, the possible templates that may be selected could be particularly adapted for job announcements, training courses, demographic information, a calendar and free form. After the administrator selects one of these templates for the new draft version of the topic and has clicked on "continue" in step 540, a page is displayed in step 550 that allows administrator to add content. After all of the new content has been entered into the selected template, the administrator clicks on "save" in step 560, whereby a new draft version is created in step 570. The process is then returned to step 480.

After the administrator has clicked in step 580 on the link 300e (Figure 5), the administrator is presented in step 590 with a page that allows the administrator to change or add to the links and link names of the portion 42f of the home page 40 of the proprietor site (Figure 4B). Once the administrator clicks in step 600 on "Save", the process is returned in step 610 to the control panel 300 (Figure 5).

It is appreciated that the administrator is not authorized to change or edit the content and/or links of the portions 42b and c of the proprietor site homepage 40 as shown in Figure 4B. Rather, only the host or its employees are enabled to change the portions 42b and c as will be explained in detail below with respect to Figure 14.

Referring now to Figure 8, when the administrator has clicked in step 620 on the link 300f of the control panel 300 (Figure 5), a screen is displayed in step 630 that gives the administrator the choice either: 1) to modify the profile questions or 2) to view or edit individual profiles. If the administrator elects in step 640 to modify the profile questions, a page is displayed in step 700 that allows the administrator to revise the profile questions and content. Once the administrator clicks in step 710 on "Save", the process is returned in step 720 to the site control panel 300 (Figure 5). If the administrator elected in step 640 to edit the user profiles, a page is presented in step 650 that lists the selectable user profiles. Once a profile is selected by the administrator, the selected user profile is displayed in step 660, which links the administrator to step 670. When the administrator clicks in step 670 on "Edit This Policy, the administrator is enabled in step 680 to edit this user's profile. Once the

WO 01/18666

PCT/US00/24524

administrator clicks in step 685 on "Submit Changes", the process is returned in step 690 to the control panel 300 (Figure 5).

Referring now to Figure 9, when the administrator clicks in step 730 on link 300g (Figure 5), the administrator is prompted by the display in step 740 of a screen to input the names and passwords of users. After the administrator inputs the names and passwords of users and clicks in step 750 on "Submit", the process is returned to step 740, wherein the administrator can input another user's information. Steps 740 and 750 may be repeated, until the administrator has entered all of the user information.

When the administrator clicks in step 760 on the link 300h (Figure 5), a page is displayed in step 770 that allows the administrator to input the names and passwords of additional site administrators. Once the administrator clicks in step 780 on the "Submit" tab, the administrator is returned to step 770, wherein the administrator can input in step 770 another authorized administrator's information. Steps 770 and 780 may be repeated until the information of all desired administrators has been entered.

When the administrator clicks in Step 790 on link 300i (Figure 5), a page is displayed in step 800 that allows the administrator to choose either: 1) when or 2) where to block access to the proprietor's web site. Step 800 allows the administrator to choose when or where to block access of employees to the site. Depending on the choice made in step 800, the administrator enters the time/date when or the place where access to the site will be blocked. Once the administrator clicks on "Save" in step 820, the process is returned in step 830 to the site control panel 300 (Figure 5).

When the administrator clicks in step 840 on link 300j, a page is displayed in step 850 with a selectable list of previously sorted site usage information. For example, such information may take the form of a list of users, who are logged into the site of interest, which topics the users accessed, and how long the users were logged into each of these topics. The administrator clicks in step 860 on the needed usage from the list of usages listed on the displayed page. Then, the selected usage information is displayed in step 870. After viewing the information, the administrator clicks on the "main menu" button to access the control panel 300.

When the administrator clicks in step 880 on the "Site Size" link 300k (Figure 5), information about the hard disk space will be displayed in step 890. For example such information would include: 1) the current amount of disk space that is being used, and 2) the costs that will be incurred as a result of using hard disk space over a predetermined limit.

When the administrator clicks in step 900 on the "Fee Schedule" link 300l, step 910 displays fee schedule information. Such fee schedule information may include: 1) initial license fees, 2) a per registered user monthly fee, 3) the minimums and maximums per registered user monthly fees.

When the administrator clicks in step 920 on the "Site Agreement" link 300m (Figure 5), step 930 displays the site agreement that was accepted by this web site's proprietor.

When the administrator clicks on step 940 on the "Account Profile" link 300n (Figure 5), step 950 displays the account profile information, which illustratively includes contact information in terms of the address, phone and fax numbers for and the name of the proprietor and of the primary administrator.

Figure 10 is a diagram that represents the process of managing 900 carried out by the host of the server 14 or the host's employees to manage the server 14 and to exchange information with the site proprietor and the sponsors. In step 970, a host employee enters in its browser the URL address of the main or home page of the server 14 (Figure 1). Thereafter, the host employee is presented with a home page 995 of the host in the form of a menu, which shows the many links for the purpose of managing client sites. Home application file 30 (Figure 1) implements the management homepage 995; the server host or its employees communicate with the management home page 995 whereby the server 14 is managed as will be explained below.

Step 990 represents the action of clicking on one of the links. In particular, link 990a brings the host employee to step 1000 (Figure 11). Link 990b brings the host employee to step 1060 (Figure 11). Link 990c brings the host employee to step 1090 (Figure 11). Link 990d brings the host employee to step 1150 (Figure 12). Link 990e brings the host employee to step 1190 (Figure 12). Link 990f brings the host employee to step 1230 (Figure 12). Link 990g brings the host employee to step 1290 (Figure 12). Link 990h brings the host employee to step 1330 (Figure 12). Link 990i brings the host employee to step 1370 (Figure 12). Link 990j brings the host employee to step 1430 (Figure 12). Link 990k brings the host employee to step 1470 (Figure 13). Link 990l brings the host employee to step 1490 (Figure 13). Link 990m brings the host employee to step 1510 (Figure 13). Link 990n brings the host employee to step 1550 (Figure 13). Link 990o brings the host employee to step 1610 (Figure 13). Link 990p brings the host employee to step 1650 (Figure 13). Link 990q brings the host employee to step 1690 (Figure 13). Link 990r brings the host employee to step 1730 (Figure 14). Link 990s brings the host employee to step 1790 (Figure 14). Link 990t brings the host employee to step 1830 (Figure 14). Link 990u brings the host employee to step 1890 (Figure 14). Link 990v brings the host employee to step 1930 (Figure 15).

Referring now to Figure 11, when the host employee has clicked in step 1000 on the "Company Heading" link 990a of the management or host homepage 995 (Figure 10), a screen is displayed in step 1000 to facilitate a host employee to find information about the proprietors. Step 1000 provides a list of the headings or categories by which various attributes of the proprietor may be categorized or sorted. For example, attributes of the proprietor may be categorized or alphabetized. For example, the presorted categories of proprietor attributes may include: 1) a list of alphabetized

AMENDED SHEET

WO 01/18666

PCT/US00/24524

names of the proprietors, 2) an alphabetized list of the states where the proprietors are located, 3) an alphabetized list of the names of the primary administrator of the proprietors, 4) a chronological list of the start dates of the proprietors, 5) an alphabetized list the sponsors of the proprietors, and 6) an alphabetized list of the URL's of the proprietors. Once a presorted heading or category is selected by the host employee in step 1000, a list of the proprietors arranged according to the presorted heading or category is displayed in step 1010. Once the host employee clicks in step 1020 on the displayed proprietor site record, a screen displays in step 1030 the proprietor's record, e.g., its contact information and a link to the proprietor's web site. The host employee clicks in step 1040 on the link to the proprietor's web site, whereby the host employee is granted access in step 1050 to the proprietor's site.

When the host employee clicks in step 1060 on the link 990b, a page is displayed in step 1070 that allows the host employee to enter search criteria or a search delimiter for the purpose of searching for the record of a particular proprietor. Illustratively, such delimiters or criteria may include: 1) the proprietor's name, the nested URL of the proprietor's folder 32, etc. Once the host employee clicks in step 1080 on "to find", a screen bearing a list of the proprietors that match the criteria entered is displayed. Once the host employee clicks in step 1030 (as described above) on a particular proprietor, the record of that proprietor is displayed. When the host employee clicks on the site link in step 1040, the host employee is taken in step 1050 to the web site of the selected proprietor.

When the host employee clicks in step 1090 on the link 990c, a page bearing an alphabetized list of registered users in groups of 100 is displayed in step 1100. Once the host employee clicks on a particular group in step 1110, the host employee is presented with a display of the names of all of the user's proprietors in the group selected. Once the host employee clicks in step 1130 on a name of one of the proprietors of the displayed group, a screen bearing the selected proprietor's user information, e.g., the user's first or last name, is displayed to the host employee in step 1140.

Referring now to Figure 12, when the host employee clicks on the "Find User" link 990d in step 1150, a "User Lookup" form is displayed in step 1160 that allows the host employee to input a known name of a user into a search engine. Once the host administrator clicks in step 1170 on "Find", a list of all the proprietors that match the inputted user name and links to those proprietors are displayed in step 1180. Once the host employee clicks in step 1184 on a company link, the host employee is returned in step 1186 to step 1030 (Figure 1100), whereby information may be viewed in step 1030 and the host employee may be taken to the web site of this particular proprietor in step 1050 as described above.

After the host employee has clicked in step 1190 on the "Create Letter" link 990e, a form is displayed in step 1200 that allows the host employee to input an e-mail, i.e., the letter, which is customized to be sent to one or more site of the primary administrators. Such letters permit the host

WO 01/18666

PCT/US00/24524

employees to notify the primary administrators and the proprietors of the current status of the system (outages), changes in host policy, etc. After the e-mail has been entered and the host employee has clicked in step 1210 on "Save Letter", the host employee is returned in step 1280 to the management homepage 995 (Figure 10).

5 When the host employee clicks in step 1230 the "View All Letters" link 990f, all of the saved letters are displayed in step 1240. Once the host employee clicks on one of the saved letters to "Edit" in step 1250, the host employee is presented in step 1260 with a page that allows the host employee to edit the selected letter. After the host employee has clicked in step 1270 on "Save and close", the host employee is returned in step 1280 to the management homepage 995 (Figure 10).

10 When the host employee has clicked in step 1290 on the "New Invitation" link 990g, a form is displayed in step 1300 that allows the host employee to revise and customize the invitation number attributes, e.g., the name of the sponsor and the advantageous pricing provided to the sponsor's prospective proprietors. Once the host employee clicks in step 1310 on "Save and close", the edited invitation is stored and the host employee is returned in step 1320 to the management homepage (995).

15 When the host employee clicks in step 1330 on the "Import Invitations" link 990h, a page is displayed in step 1340 that allows the host employee to import the invitation numbers and attributes, e.g., pricing, name of sponsor, the invitation ID, the number of invitations of a sponsor, etc. Once the host employee clicks on "Save" in step 1350, the imported invitation is saved and the host employee
20 is returned in step 1360 to the management homepage 995 (Figure 10).

When the host employee has clicked in step 1370 on the "View Invitations" link 990i, a page is displayed in step 1380 that lists the invitation numbers in groups of one hundred. Once the host employee clicks on a selected group in step 1390, a page bearing a list of the invitations of the selected group is displayed in step 1400. Once the host employer clicks in step 1410 on its selected
25 invitation, the selected invitation number information is displayed in step 1420.

After the host employee has clicked in step 1430 on the "View Used Invitations" link 990j (Figure 10), a list of all the used invitation numbers is displayed in step 1440. Once the host employee has clicked in step 1450 on a selected used invitation, the number's information of the selected used invitation is displayed in step 1460. The number's information indicate which
30 proprietors used a particular invitation, when an invitation was used, the number of proprietors who used an invitation, etc.

Referring now to Figure 13, when the host employee clicks in step 1470 on the "User Rankings" link 990k (Figure 10), the host employee is presented in step 1480 with a display of the rankings of and other information about the users who have played a game, for example the
35 "Investment Challenge" game in one illustrative embodiment of this invention. It is contemplated that

WO 01/18666

PCT/US00/24524

a game is programmed to be played by users of a particular proprietor site. The scores of the employees are kept and the rankings of the users over a prescribed period of time are also kept in the server's records. As will be discussed below, the starting dates for the prescribed periods of time are also kept.

When the host employee has clicked in step 1490 on the "View Start Date" link 990l, a page is displayed in step 1500 that lists the "Investment Challenge" game's start dates. the host employee clicks in step 1510 on the "New Start Date" link 990m (Figure 10) to then display in step 1520 a form that allows the host employee to input new start dates for the "Investment Challenge" game. Once the host employee has revised the start dates and has clicked on "Submit" in step 1530, the host employee is returned in step 1540 to the management homepage 995 (Figure 10).

After the host employee has clicked in step 1550 on the "View Current Pricing Tracks" link 990n, a list of ID numbers, each identifying a pricing track for its proprietor, is displayed in step 1560. Once the host employee has selected and clicked in step 1570 on a particular ID pricing track number, a page is displayed in step 1580 that allows the host employee to edit the pricing track. When the host employee clicks in step 1590 on "Save and Close" the revised pricing track is stored and the host employee is returned in step 1600 to the management homepage 995 (Figure 10).

After the host employee has clicked in step 1610 on the "Create New Pricing Track" link 990o, the host employee is authorized in step 1620 to create a new pricing track. After the host employee has clicked on "Save & Close" and saved the new pricing track in step 1630, the host employee is returned in step 1640 to the management homepage 995 (Figure 10).

After the host employee clicks in step 1650 on the "View Menu Sponsors" link 990p (Figure 10), a page is displayed in step 1660 baring a list or menu of all of the sponsors. Once the host employee selects and clicks in step 1670 on the name of the selected sponsor, a page is displayed in step 1680 presenting information of the selected sponsor and permitting the host employee to edit that information. This sponsor information includes for example: 1) sponsor name, 2) contact information such as address, E-mail and telephone numbers of the sponsor, etc. After the host employee has saved the updated sponsor information and has clicked on "Save & Close" in step 1682, the host employee is returned in step 1685 to the management homepage 995 (Figure 10).

After the host employee has clicked in step 1690 on the "Create New Menu Sponsor" link 990q (Figure 10), a form is displayed that allows the host employee to input new sponsor information as defined above. Once the host employee has save the inputted sponsor information and has clicked in step 1710 on "Save and close", the host employee is returned in step 1710 to the management homepage 995 (Figure 10).

Referring now to Figure 14, when the host employee has clicked in step 1730 on the "View Menu" link 990r (Figure 10), a page is displayed in step 1740 that lists the menus of each sponsor.

IPEA/US 06 AUG 2001

Once the host employee selects and clicks in step 1750 on the selected name of a sponsor, the host employee is taken to a form that allows the host employee to edit the menu of selected sponsor. Once the edited menu has been saved and the "Save and close" button is clicked in step 1770, the host employee is returned in step 1780 to the management homepage 995 (Figure 10).

After the host employee has clicked in step 1790 to the "Create Menu" link 990s (Figure 10), a form is displayed in step 1800 that allows the host employer to create a new menu for a sponsor by inputting to that page the menu name, which is that name given by the system to both of the sponsor portions 42b and c of the proprietor homepage 40 (Figure 4B), and labels, which are the titles given to each of the respective portions 42b and c. Once the host employee has saved the new sponsor menu and has clicked in step 1810 on "Save and close", the host employee is returned in step 1820 to the management homepage 995 (Figure 10).

Once the host employee has clicked in step 1830 on the "View Menu" link 990t (Figure 10), the host employee is presented in step 1840 with a display that lists the current menu items of the proprietors. After the host employee selects and clicks in step 1850 on a selected menu item, a form is displayed in step 1860 that allows the host employee to edit the content of the selected menu items. Once the host employee saves the edited menu item and clicks in step 1870, the host employee is returned in step 1880 to the management homepage 995 (Figure 10).

When the host employee has clicked in step 1890 on the "Create Menu Item" link 990u (Figure 10), the host employee is presented in step 1900 with a form that allows the host employee to input: 1) the name of the label, which appears as a clickable link on the right hand portions 42b and c of the proprietor homepage 40 (Figure 4B), 2) the link to which a product or service sponsor as providing for the new item for menu of a given sponsor, and 3) a numeric ranking system to define the order in which the menu items will be displayed on the proprietor homepage 40. Once the host employee has saved the new item(s) and its name, and has clicked on "Save and close" in step 1910, the host employee is returned in step 1920 to the management homepage 995 (Figure 10).

Referring now to Figure 15, when the host employee has clicked in step 1930 on the "Generate Site(s)" link 990v (Figure 10), the host employee is presented in step 1940 with a "Site Generation Creation Form" that allows the host employee to take two options. The host employee can: 1) upload a file, which contains formatted information that reserves multiple proprietor web sites, or 2) reserve a single proprietor's web site by manually entering the required information. It is appreciated that the required information that must be entered includes a distinct URL for each site to be generated. The host employee selects and clicks on the desired option in step 1950. Next, step 1960 compares the URL that was assigned to each of the newly generated sites, to a stored list of URLs which have been previously assigned and are not therefor available to be assigned. If the URL is found in the list and therefore is unavailable, an error message identifying the unavailable URL is

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WO 01/18666**PCT/US00/24524**

generated and transmitted in step 1980 to step 1940. Once a URL is selected that is available, the primary administrator's name corresponding to the URL's site is compared with a list of all of the participant's names on the server 14. If the primary administrator's name is unavailable, step 1940 is served in step 1980 with an error message stating that the selected primary administrator's name is taken. Once a primary administrator's name is selected that is available as determined in step 1970, the information, i.e., the preliminary site's URL and the primary administrator's name, is saved in step 1990. Thereafter, the host employee is returned in step 2000 to the management homepage 995 (Figure 1) and the proprietor's web site is displayed.

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WO 01/18666

PCT/US00/24524

We claim:

1. A method of using a server to construct on an undivided memory a plurality of web sites, each web site being related to an administrator, said method comprising the steps of:

5 (a) creating a template with a set of operations that will facilitate each of said plurality of administrators to construct and input content into its related web site; and

(b) responding to an administrator's logging on to the server to initiate a process of constructing a web site, said process including the steps of:

1. allocating a portion of the undivided memory to form a file for receiving site content, and

10 2. refreshing from said template said set of operations into said web site file, whereby each web site has its own set of operations to construct and input content into its file.

2. A server adapted to communicate over a network with network sites connected thereto, the network sites operating in a language adapted for transmission over the network and use by the network sites, said server comprising:

15 (a) a memory comprising a plurality of files;

(b) a plurality of sites formed on said server, each of said plurality of sites comprising one of said files, said plurality of files being filled with content written in a native language other than the network adapted language;

20 (c) an engine for converting the native language into the network adapted language; and

(d) a controller responsive to a request from one of the network sites for the content of one of said server sites to download from said server site its content in its native language to said engine, whereby said engine converts the downloaded native language of said one server site into the network adapted language for transmission over the internet to the requesting network site.

25 3. A server as claimed in claim 2, wherein the network in the Internet and the network adapted language is HTML.

4. A server adapted for communication with a plurality of administrators, said server comprising:

(a) a memory comprising a plurality of files;

30 (b) a plurality of sites formed on said server, each of said plurality of sites comprising one of said plurality of files; and

WO 01/18666

PCT/US00/24524

(c) said file of each of said plurality of server sites storing a set of operations that an administrator related to one site may use to construct its site and to input data into said site's file at the discretion of the related administrator.

5 5. A method of operating a server to preassign a plurality of web sites to a plurality of prospects, the server including a memory on which a plurality of web sites may be constructed, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) developing a list of prospects for a web site;

(b) providing to each of the prospects an indication that a web site has been assigned to each prospect;

10 (c) notifying said prospects that a web site has been preassigned to said prospect and that each prospect has been assigned said indication;

(d) at least one prospect logging on to said server and inputting its indication thereto; and

(e) the server responding to the prospect's logging onto said server and said indication to construct on the memory a web site for the prospect.

15 6. A server adapted for communication with a plurality of administrators and a plurality of users, said server comprising:

(a) a plurality of virgin sites ready to be generated and loaded with content;

(b) a controller for receiving communications from each of the plurality of administrators and the plurality of users;

(c) each of said plurality of web sites having a file for receiving content;

(d) said server being programmed with a set of operations for constructing and loading each of said virgin sites; and

25 (e) said controller permissioning one of the plurality of administrators to access said set operations whereby the administrator can construct and load with content a related site at the discretion of the permissioned administrator, and responsive to a communication of a user to only access and view the content loaded into the user's related web site.

7. A method of adapting a server to permission users to access at least one web site, the one web site having a content file, said method comprising the steps:

30 (a) constructing and filling the content file of the web site with content;

(b) permissioning an administrator to control the access to one web site by uploading the names of permissioned users in a user file; and

WO 01/18666

PCT/US00/24524

(c) permissioning a user to gain access to the one web site and to view its content by matching the name of the user with a name in the user file.

8. A method of facilitating a host to manage a plurality of web sites, each of said plurality of web sites including a file, said method comprising the steps of:

5 (a) creating a master template with a set of operations for constructing and loading content to each file of said plurality of web sites;

(b) the host giving instructions to said master file to determine said set of operations;
and

10 (c) repetitively refresh each file of said plurality of web sites with said set of operations from said master template, whereby the construction and loading of content to each web site is controlled by the host.

9. A server adapted to communicate over a network with each of an administrator, a user and a host of the server, said server comprising:

15 (a) a plurality of virgin web sites ready to be constructed, each web site having a file ready to be filed with content; and

(b) a controller programmed to communicate separately with each of the administrator, the user and the host, to generate a distinct home page upon the login of each of the administrator, the user and the host, said administrator's homepage comprising a set of links to construct and to load content to the file of the administrator's web site, said user's homepage
20 comprising a link permitting the user access to the contents of the file of its website, and a host's homepage having a set of links to manage said server and to keep track and to manage the use of said plurality of web sites.

10. A method of granting access for at least one prospective proprietor to one of a plurality of web sites created on a server, said method comprising the steps of:

25 (a) inputting a request from the one prospective proprietor to the one web site;

(b) responding to the prospective proprietor's request to construct a web site on the server and to grant proprietor access to the one web site;

(c) prompt the prospective proprietor to agree to use the web site; and

30 (d) responding to the prospective proprietor's agreement to use the site by publishing the prospective proprietor's on a network.

11. A method of managing the access of a number of participants to a plurality of web sites created on a server, the participants including a host of the server, a proprietor of at least one of the

plurality of web sites, and a plurality of users of the proprietor's one web site, method comprising the steps of:

(a) programming the server to establish a hierarchy of access levels to the plurality of web sites; and

5 (b) assigning levels of access to the host, the proprietor and the users such that the host has the highest level of access, the proprietor an intermediate level of access, and the user the lowest level of access.

12. A method of operating on a host computer to facilitate the management of each of a plurality of web sites by at least one administrator for each of the plurality of web sites, said method
10 comprising the steps of:

(a) constructing in the host computer a file for each of the plurality of web sites;

(b) inputting to select of the plurality of web sites a set of operations that will facilitate each of the plurality of administrators to control the construction, operation and inputting of content into its related web site; and

15 (c) constructing and displaying to each of the plurality of administrators a control panel that facilitates each administrator to control the execution of selected of the set of operations of its web site.

13. The method of operating on a host computer as recited in claim 12, wherein there is further included the step of facilitating an administrator to control the execution of selected of its sets
20 of operations to construct at least one web site home page to display the content input to a particular web site to a set of users of that particular web site.

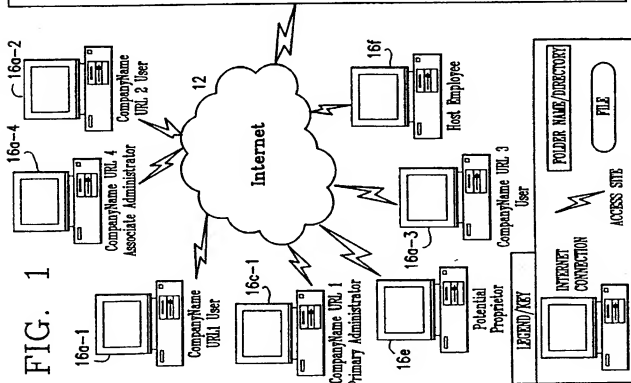
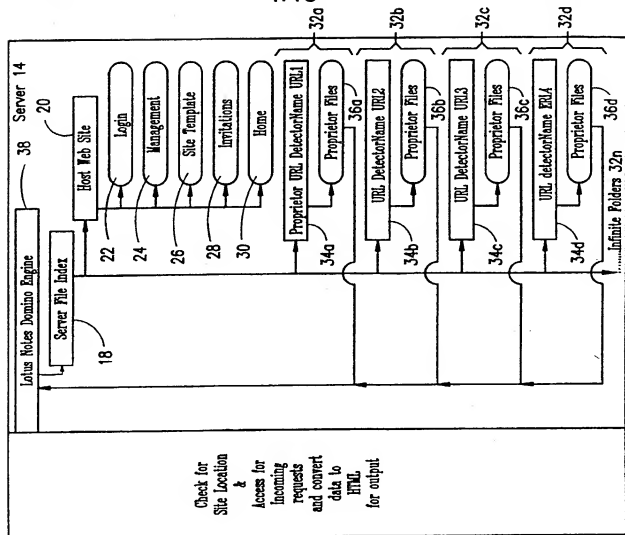
14. The method of operating on a host computer as recited in claim 13, wherein the administrator uses its control panel to construct its web site home page.

15. The method of operating on a host computer as recited in claim 12, wherein the administrator uses its control panel to input various new draft content to the control panel before
25 publishing that various content from the control panel to the web site home page.

16. The method of operating on a host computer as recited in claim 12, wherein after the administrator has used the control panel to create new draft content, then publishing the new draft content.

30 17. The method of operating on a host computer as recited in claim 13, wherein there is included the step of using a common logon page that is accessible by the plurality of sets of users and administrators to gain access to the host computer.

18. The method of operating on a host computer as recited in claim 17, wherein the web site home page includes a link to the set of operations inputted into the plurality of files, and there is further included the step of permissioning only the administrators to link to the set of operations.



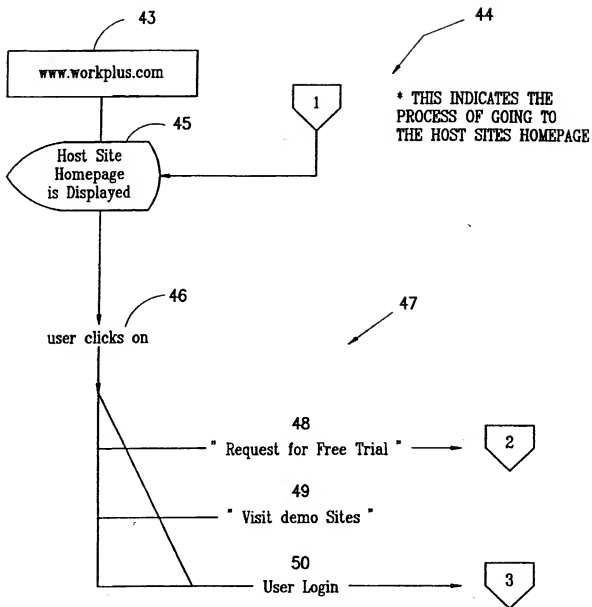


FIG. 2

3 / 18

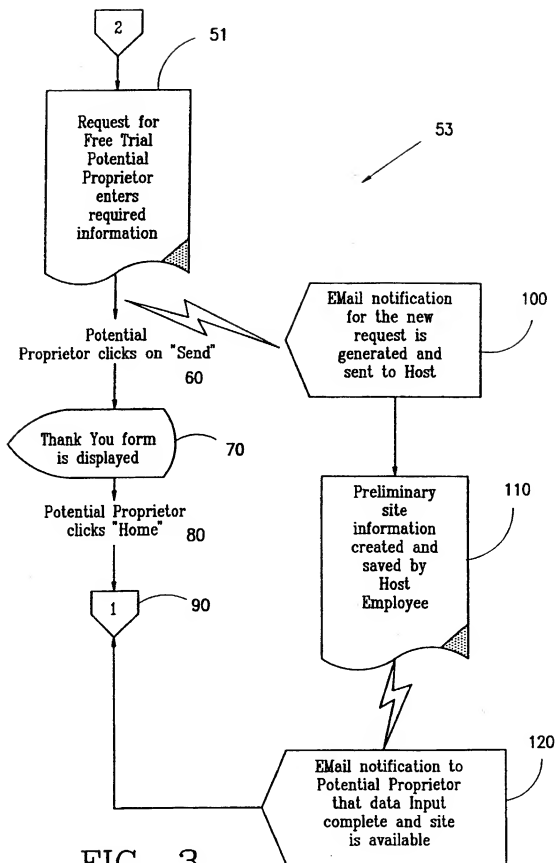
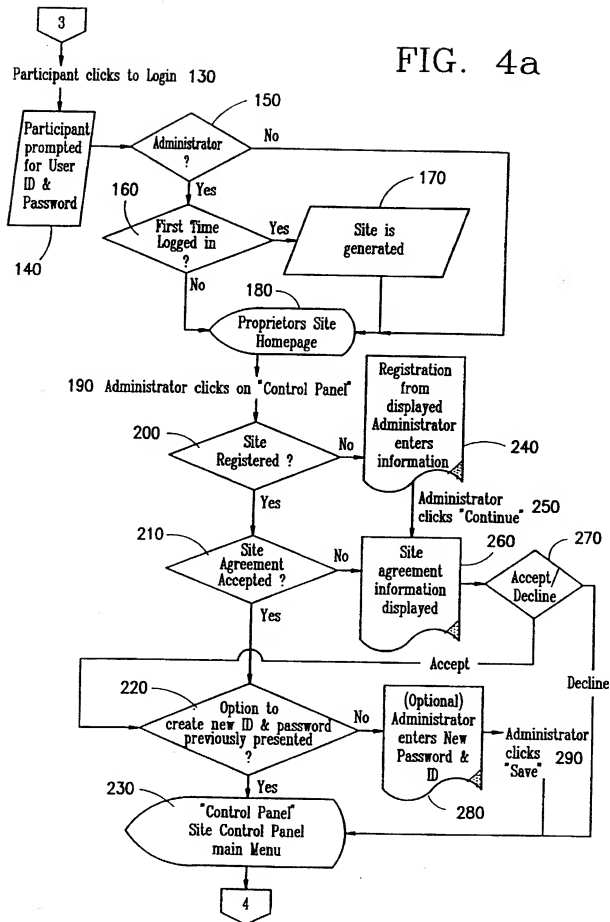


FIG. 3

FIG. 4a



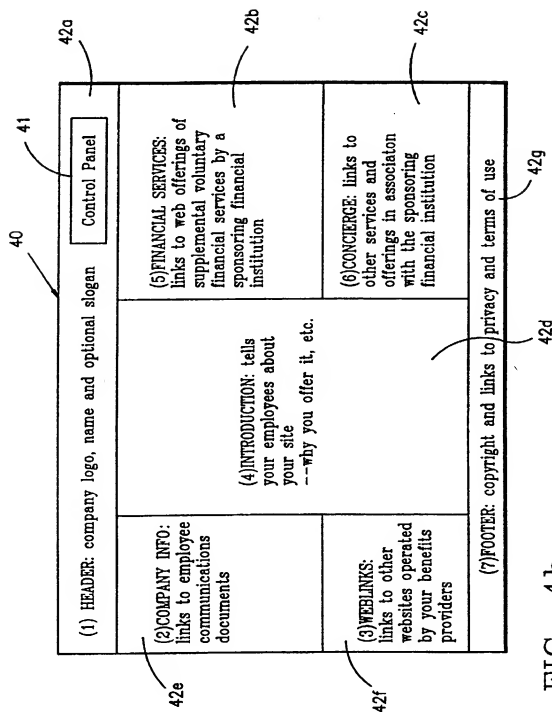


FIG. 4b

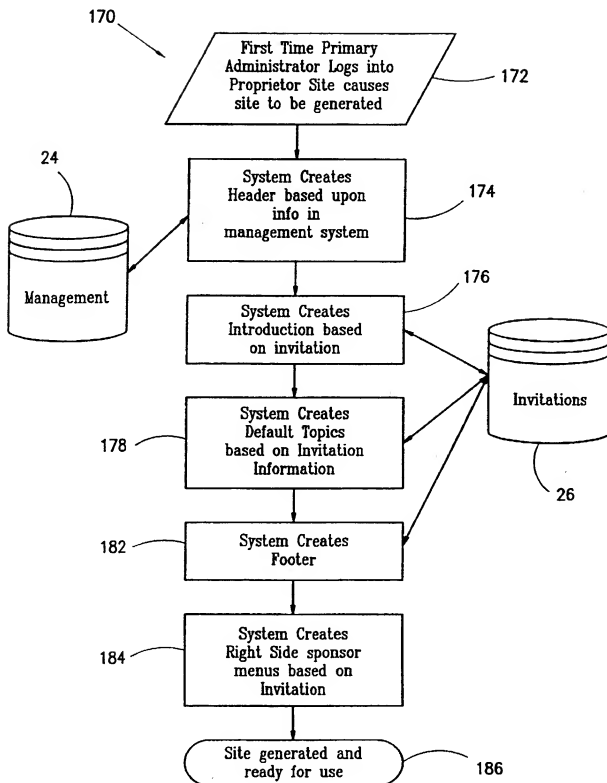


FIG. 4c

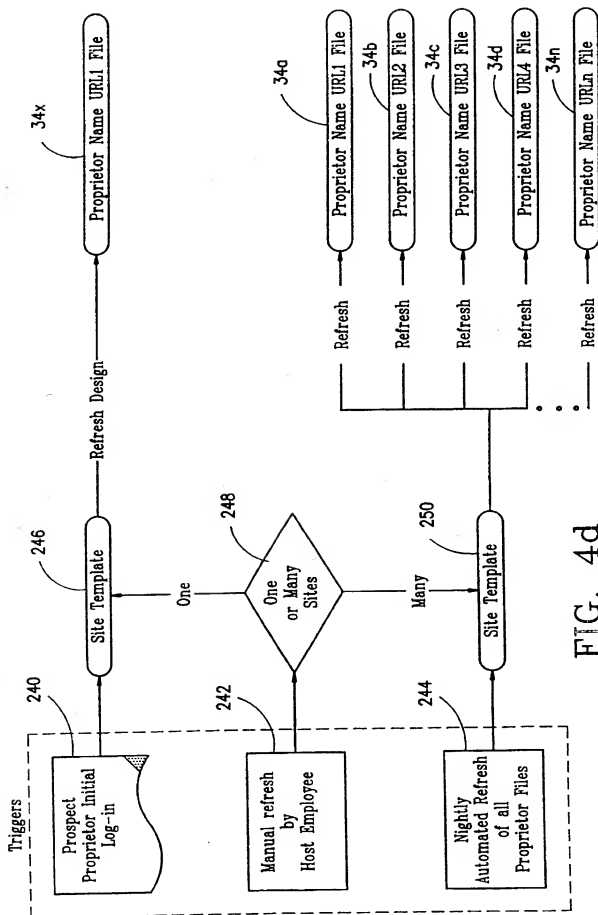


FIG. 4d

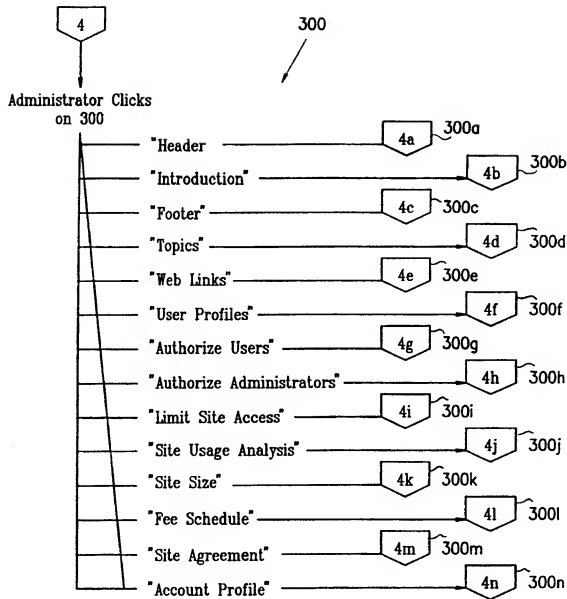


FIG. 5

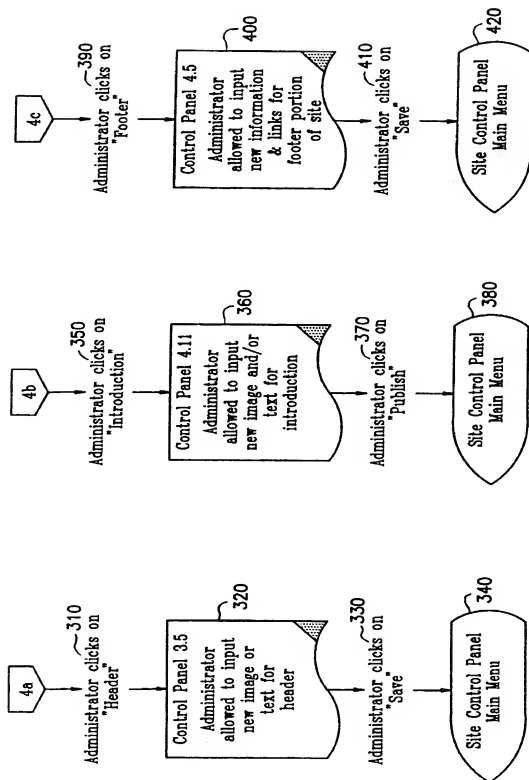
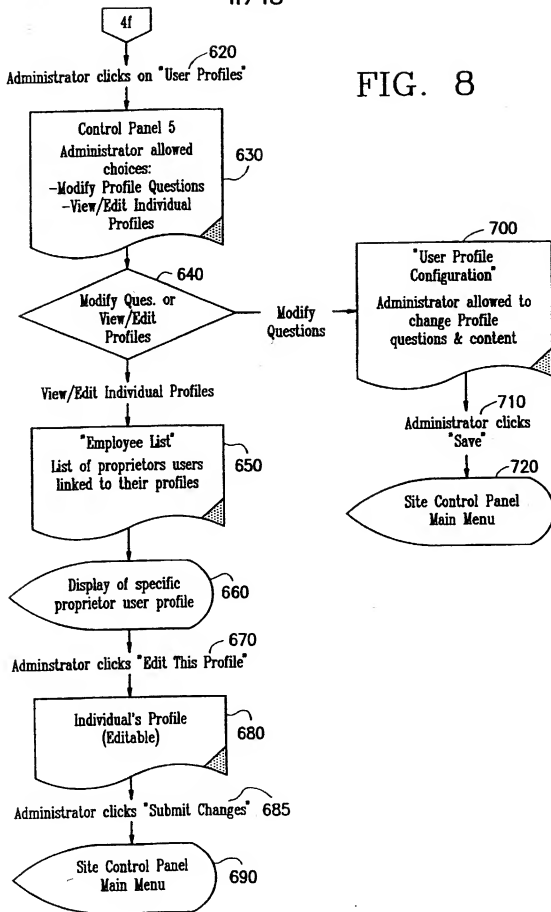


FIG. 6



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FIG. 8



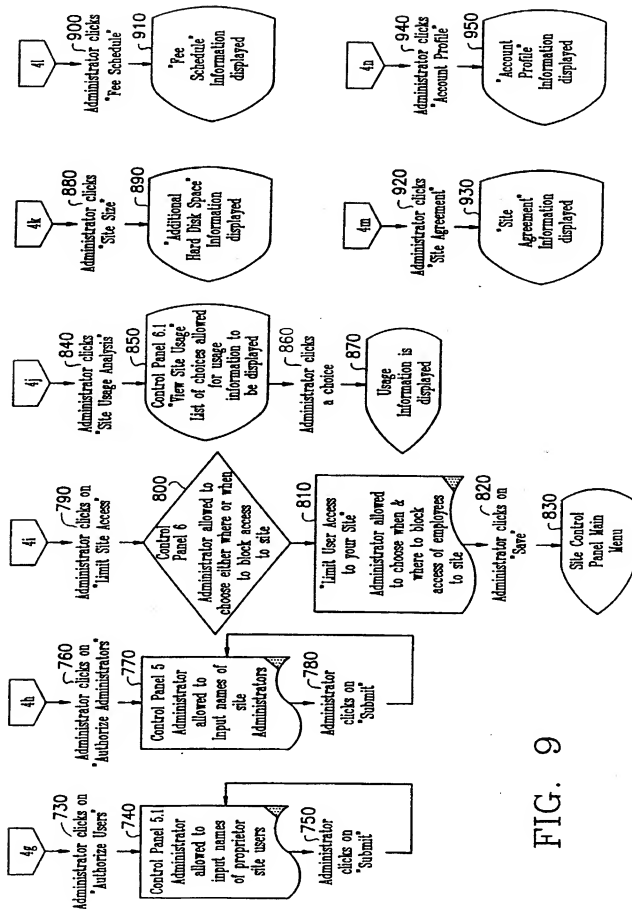
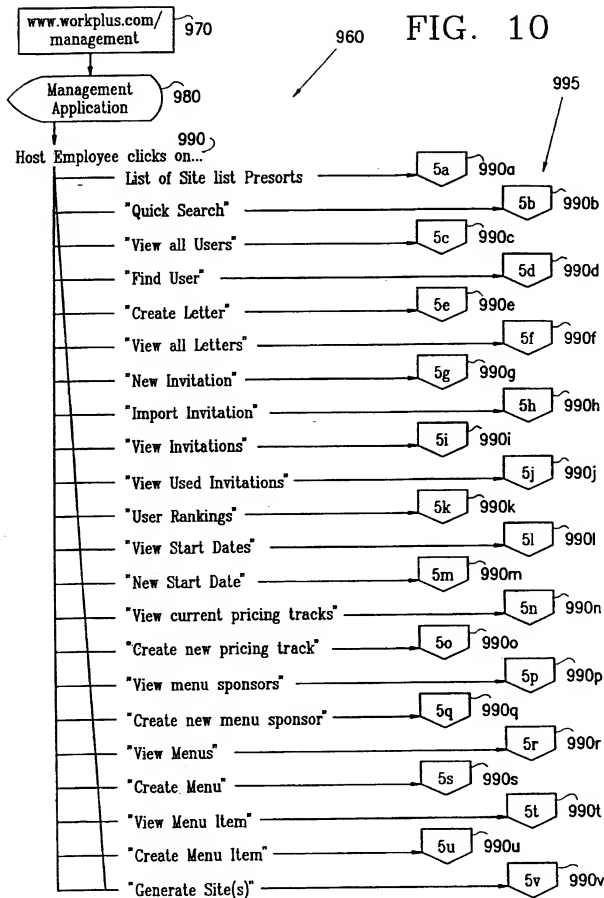
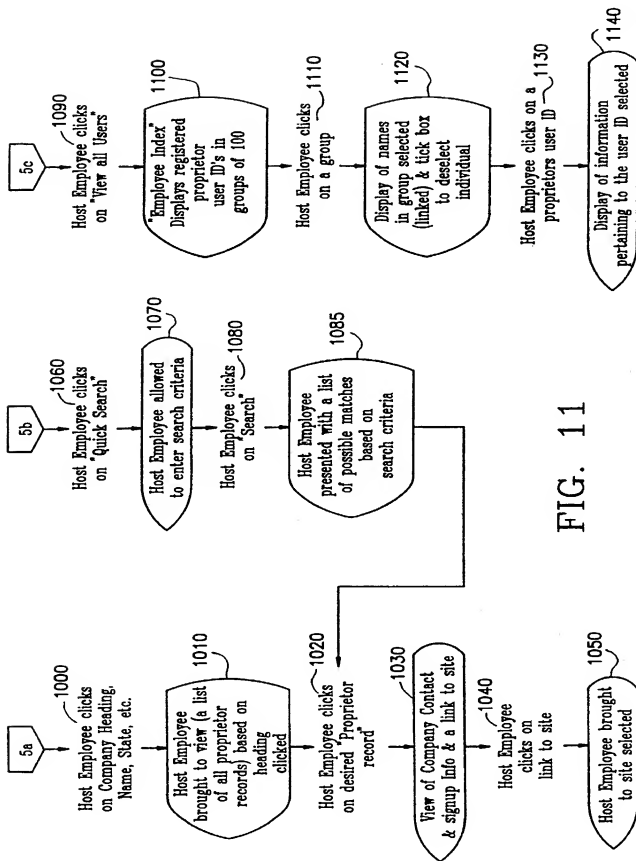


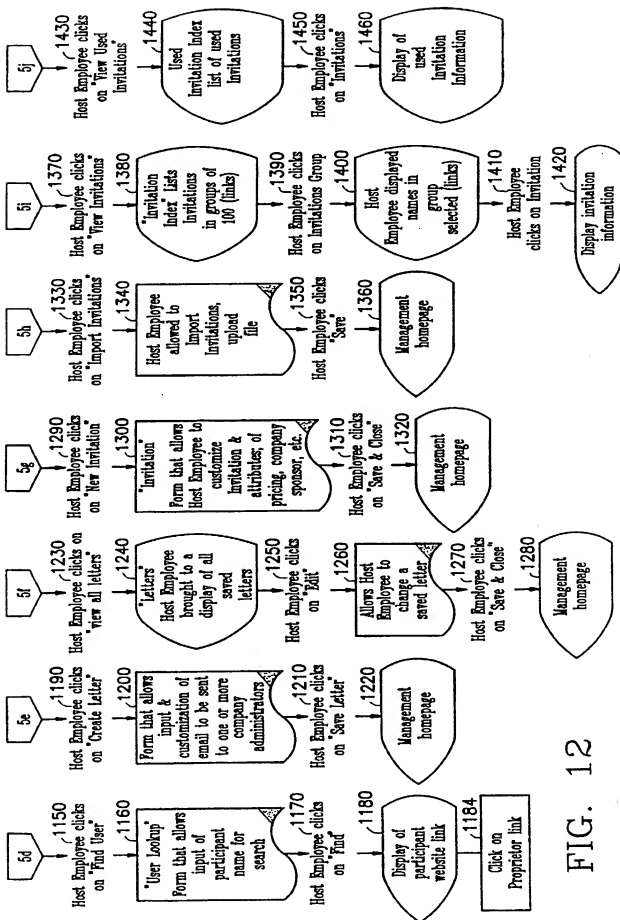
FIG. 9

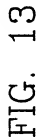
FIG. 10





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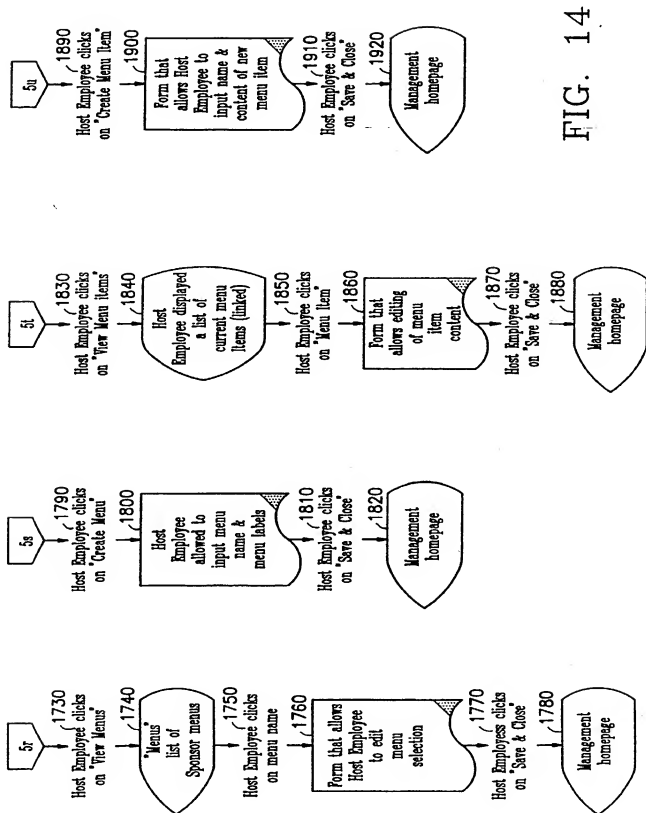
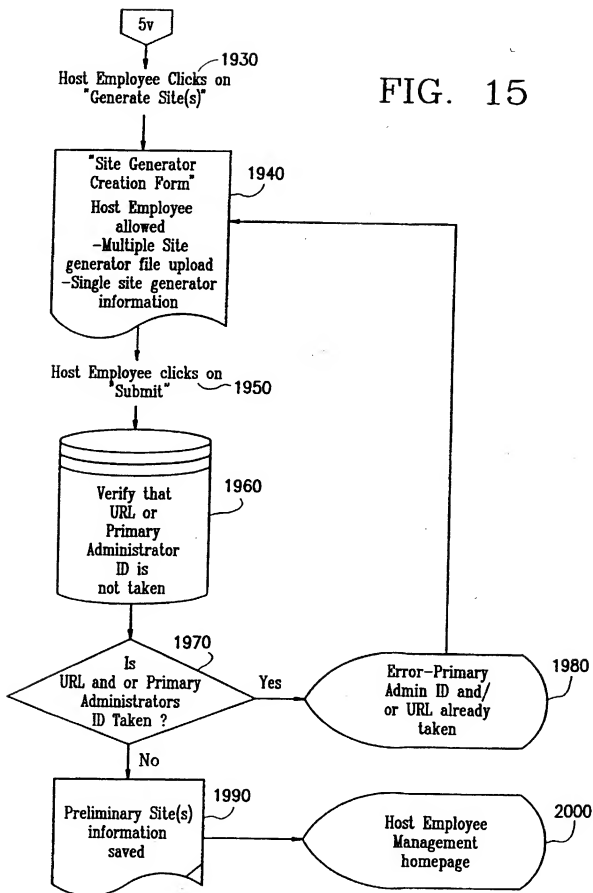


FIG. 15



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#4

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**DECLARATION FOR UTILITY OR
 DESIGN
 PATENT APPLICATION
 (37 CFR 1.63)**

☐ Declaration Submitted with Initial Filing OR ☒ Declaration Submitted after Initial Filing (surcharge (37 CFR 1.16 (e)) required)

Attorney Docket Number	23195.06
First Named Inventor	Richard C. Shaw
COMPLETE IF KNOWN	
Application Number	10 / 070,881
Filing Date	March 6, 2002
Group Art Unit	Unknown
Examiner Name	Unknown

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address, and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled:

**METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR CREATING AND MANAGING CONTENT OF AN
 EXTRANET WITHOUT PROGRAMMING SKILLS**

the specification of which (Title of the Invention)

☐ is attached hereto
 OR

☒ was filed on (MM/DD/YYYY) 03/06/2002 as United States Application Number or PCT International

Application Number 10/070,881 and was amended on (MM/DD/YYYY) _____ (if applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment specifically referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in 37 CFR 1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d) or 355(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or 365(b) of any PCT International application which designated at least one country other than the United States of America, listed below and have also identified below, by checking the box, any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate, or of any PCT International application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed.

Prior Foreign Application Number(s)	Country	Foreign Filing Date (MM/DD/YYYY)	Priority Not Claimed	Certified Copy Attached?
			YES	NO
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

☐ Additional foreign application numbers are listed on a supplemental priority data sheet PTO/SB/02B attached hereto.

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below.

Application Number(s)	Filing Date (MM/DD/YYYY)

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(Page 1 of 2)

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U.S. Parent Application or PCT Parent Number	Parent Filing Date (MM/DD/YYYY)	Parent Patent Number (if applicable)
PCT/US00/24524	09/07/2000	

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OR			
Name	Registration Number	Name	Registration Number
R. Lewis Gable	22,479		
Mark Montague	36,612		

☐ Additional registered practitioner(s) named on supplemental Registered Practitioner Information sheet PTO/SB/02C attached hereto.

Direct all correspondence to: ☐ Customer Number or Bar Code Label ☐ OR ☒ Correspondence address below

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Address	1133 Avenue of the Americas				
City	New York	State	NY	ZIP	10036-6799
Country	USA	Telephone	(212) 790-9200	Fax	(212) 575-0671

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true, and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under 18 U.S.C. 1001 and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

Name of Sole or First Inventor:		<input type="checkbox"/> A petition has been filed for this unsigned inventor			
Given Name (first and middle (if any))		Family Name or Surname			
Richard C.		SHAW			
Inventor's Signature	Richard C.			Date	
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Post Office Address	18 South Mill Drive				
Post Office Address					
City		State	CT	ZIP	06073
		Country	US		

☒ Additional inventors are being named on the 2 supplemental Additional Inventor(s) sheet(s) PTO/SB/02A attached hereto.

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Mark Montague	36,612		

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		Fax	(212) 675-0671
		Zip	10036-6799

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under 18 U.S.C. 1001 and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of my application or any patent issued thereon.

Name of Sole or First Inventor:

☐ A petition has been filed for this unsigned inventor

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Inventor's Signature	<i>Richard C. Shaw</i>	Date	9/14/00
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		Country	US
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Post Office Address			
City	State	ZIP	Country
	CT	06073	US

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 Page 1 of 2

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Jon M.				BERUBE			
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Post Office Address							
City	VERNON South Windsor	State	CT	ZIP	06066 06074	Country	US
Name of Additional Joint Inventor, if any:		<input type="checkbox"/> A petition has been filed for this unsigned inventor					
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Inventor's Signature						Date	
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Post Office Address							
City	Hartford	State	CT	ZIP	06105	Country	US
Name of Additional Joint Inventor, if any:		<input type="checkbox"/> A petition has been filed for this unsigned inventor					
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Erwin E.				CRAMPTON, III			
Inventor's Signature						Date	
Residence: City	Merrimack	State	NH	Country	US	Citizenship	US
Post Office Address	5 Erla Road						
Post Office Address							
City	Merrimack	State	NH	ZIP	03054	Country	US

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Jon M.				BERUBE			
Inventor's Signature						Date	
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Post Office Address							
City	South Windsor	State	CT	ZIP	06074	Country	US
Name of Additional Joint Inventor, if any:		<input type="checkbox"/> A petition has been filed for this unsigned inventor					
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Inventor's Signature						Date	7-30-02
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Post Office Address							
City	Newington	State	CT	ZIP	06111	Country	US
Name of Additional Joint Inventor, if any:		<input type="checkbox"/> A petition has been filed for this unsigned inventor					
Given Name (first and middle (if any))				Family Name or Surname			
Erwin E.				CRAMPTON, III			
Inventor's Signature						Date	
Residence: City	Merrimack	State	NH	Country	US	Citizenship	US
Post Office Address	5 Erie Road						
Post Office Address							
City	Merrimack	State	NH	ZIP	03054	Country	US

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☐ A petition has been filed for this unsigned inventor

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Family Name or Surname

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Signature

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Residence: City

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ZIP

06074

Country

US

Name of Additional Joint Inventor, if any:

☐ A petition has been filed for this unsigned inventor

Given Name (first and middle (if any))

Family Name or Surname

Louis S.

PIANO

Inventor's
Signature

Date

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Hartford

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Post Office Address

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Post Office Address

City

Hartford

State

CT

ZIP

06105

Country

US

Name of Additional Joint Inventor, if any:

☐ A petition has been filed for this unsigned inventor

Given Name (first and middle (if any))

Family Name or Surname

Erwin E.

CRAMPTON, III

Inventor's
Signature9-6-02
Date

Residence: City

Merrimack

State

NH

Country

US

Citizenship

US

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Post Office Address

City

Merrimack

State

NH

ZIP

03054

Country

US

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DECLARATION

 ADDITIONAL INVENTOR(S)
 Supplemental Sheet
 Page 2 of 2

Name of Additional Joint Inventor, if any:		<input type="checkbox"/> A petition has been filed for this unnamed inventor					
Given Name (first and middle (if any))		Family Name or Surname					
Nathaniel		CRAMPTON					
Inventor's Signature						Date	
Residence: City	Nashua	State	NH	Country	US	Citizenship	US
Post Office Address	178 1/2 Kinsley Road						
Post Office Address							
City	Nashua	State	NH	ZIP	03080	Country	US
Name of Additional Joint Inventor, if any:		<input type="checkbox"/> A petition has been filed for this unnamed inventor					
Given Name (first and middle (if any))		Family Name or Surname					
Robert		BARBER					
Inventor's Signature	<i>Robert Barber</i>					Date	9/9/02
Residence: City	Hope	State	RI	Country	US	Citizenship	US
Post Office Address	30 Rise North Sun Drive						
Post Office Address							
City	Hope	State	RI	ZIP	02831	Country	US
Name of Additional Joint Inventor, if any:		<input type="checkbox"/> A petition has been filed for this unnamed inventor					
Given Name (first and middle (if any))		Family Name or Surname					
Pam		RAMALHINHO					
Inventor's Signature						Date	
Residence: City	Hudson	State	NH	Country	US	Citizenship	US
Post Office Address	17 St. Mary's Drive						
Post Office Address							
City	Hudson	State	NH	ZIP	03051	Country	US

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DECLARATION	ADDITIONAL INVENTOR(S) Supplemental Sheet Page <u>2</u> of <u>2</u>
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Name of Additional Joint Inventor, if any:		<input type="checkbox"/> A petition has been filed for this unsigned inventor					
Given Name (first and middle (if any))				Family Name or Surname			
Nathaniel				CRAMPTON			
Inventor's Signature	<i>Nathaniel P. Crampton</i>			Date		9/11/02	
Residence: City	Nashua	NH	State	NH	Country	US	Citizenship
Post Office Address		178 1/2 Kinsley Road					
Post Office Address							
City	Nashua	State	NH	ZIP	03060	Country	US
Name of Additional Joint Inventor, if any:		<input type="checkbox"/> A petition has been filed for this unsigned inventor					
Given Name (first and middle (if any))				Family Name or Surname			
Robert				BARBER			
Inventor's Signature				Date			
Residence: City	Hope	State	RI	Country	US	Citizenship	US
Post Office Address		30 Rise North Sun Drive					
Post Office Address							
City	Hope	State	RI	ZIP	02831	Country	US
Name of Additional Joint Inventor, if any:		<input type="checkbox"/> A petition has been filed for this unsigned inventor					
Given Name (first and middle (if any))				Family Name or Surname			
Pam				RAMALHINHO			
Inventor's Signature	<i>Pamela Ramalhinho</i>			Date		7/11/02	
Residence: City	Hudson	NH	State	NH	Country	US	Citizenship
Post Office Address		17 St. Mary's Drive					
Post Office Address							
City	Hudson	State	NH	ZIP	03051	Country	US

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